

WASHINGTON
TIMES HERALD

X

APR 1 1953

PLAN CHEMICAL CHECK IN DEATH OF CIA OFFICIAL

25X1A9a

Autopsy Fails to Bear CPYRGHT Out Suicide Theory

A chemical analysis of the organs of the body of an administrative officer in the central intelligence agency was ordered last night after an autopsy failed to disclose the cause of his apparent suicide.

Coroner A. Magruder MacDonald said a certificate in the death of James Speyer Kronthal, the 40-year-old victim, would be withheld pending results of the chemistry checks.

Kronthal's body was found yesterday in his Georgetown home at 1662 Thirty-second St. NW. A CIA investigator was ordered to work on the case with homicide squad detectives, who said a note was found by the victim's body indicated he had been "despondent."

"Under Pressure"

Deputy Police Chief E. E. Scott, the department's chief of detectives, said the death message showed Kronthal was "under some sort of pressure involving his job," but declined to elaborate.

Also found near the body was a small vial which the coroner said probably had contained tablets. An examination of the container failed to detect the substance it held.

The body of the one-time State department official and Army officer was found, fully clothed, on a daybed in his second-floor bedroom, according to homicide squad Detective Sgt. Robert Talbot. There were no marks of violence on his body, and MacDonald estimated that he had died about 12 hours earlier—probably at about 10 p.m. Monday.

Kronthal was found by two of his fellow workers who were sent to his home after he had failed to report for work, and after several telephone calls to him went unanswered.

The house in which Kronthal died is a two-story row-type structure painted white. Neighbors said he had lived there about a year.

Talbot said Kronthal left a one-page note in his own handwriting. There was no categoric statement that he planned to take his own life, the detective added, but there was an air of despondency in the message.

Officials at the CIA said they were not certain but they believed Kronthal was not married.

Talbot said Gould Cassal, 43, and McGregor Gray, 31, found the body.

Levinia Thompson, 50-year-old maid who had reported for work at 9:15 a.m., said she had not seen Kronthal nor heard him in his bedroom.

Former History Professor

A native of Deal, N. J., Kronthal was graduated from Yale university in 1934, and took a master's degree from Harvard university in 1941. He served subsequently as an assistant instructor in history at Harvard.

Kronthal entered the Army as a private in 1942, served overseas and was discharged a captain in 1946. He joined the State department in March, 1947 and served for a time as an attache at the United States embassy in Bern, Switzerland, before he left the department last year to join CIA.

A spokesman for the agency said Kronthal worked Monday, and appeared to be "cheerful and normal." The CIA agent was dispatched to his home with police, the spokesman said, because "we are interested in the death of any of our people because of the nature of the work here."

Neighbors said Kronthal was the "quiet sort," but was pleasant and affable.